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ABSTRACT

The current educational and training system in the Republic of Ireland is based on the classic economic model of educational planning. The Department of Education administers primary, secondary, and vocational education. Universities are controlled by the Higher Education Authority. The three levels of education are primary schools; secondary and vocational schools; and regional technical colleges, the National Institutes of Higher Education, and universities. Training is the responsibility of the Industrial Training Authority and the Council for Education, Recruitment, and Training. Ireland has aggressively used education for economic ends. Unemployment problems are linked to shortages of labor requiring third-level qualifications and apprenticeships, youth unemployment, and attitudes against industrial employment. Issues confronting Irish education include external funding sources, the population growth, poor attitudes toward technical education, academic escalation, the religious influence, centralization versus decentralization, and staff development. Included in the document are descriptions of the work of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee; middle, third-level vocational education and training at Galway Regional Technical College; and academic third-level vocational education at the National Institute for Higher Education (NIHEL), Limerick. Appendixes include information on NIHEL courses, programs, and the module credit system. (YLB)

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1981

# VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

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Contents

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 2

I THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND 3

II THE TRAINING SYSTEM 10

III BACKGROUND 12

IV ISSUES CONFRONTING IRISH EDUCATION 18

V THE WORK OF THE CITY OF DUBLIN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE 22

VI A DESCRIPTION OF MIDDLE, THIRD LEVEL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT GALWAY REGIONAL TECHNICAL COLLEGE 27

VII ACADEMIC THIRD LEVEL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, LIMERICK (NIHEL) 32

APPENDIX I
European Studies 37

APPENDIX II
Courses Offered at NIHEL 38

APPENDIX III
The Module Credit System 39

APPENDIX IV
Major Professional and Educational Institutions 43

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING 44

USEFUL ADDRESSES 49

# FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is derived from visits and discussions with officials and educators working in Irish further education and training. The discussions clarified and expanded information gathered from the documents listed at the end of the text.

The study is primarily descriptive. It uses the OECD 1965 Report on Irish education, and the system's reaction to that Report, as a focus. The aims of this publication are:

1. To describe the impact of Ireland's membership of the OECD and the EEC on its educational and vocational training.
2. To describe the present system and to illustrate its work.
3. To identify the unique aspects of Ireland's system.

I am greatly indebted for the kindness and generosity shown to me by all those whom I met in Ireland, particularly to Dr F. O'Callaghan, Assistant Secretary, Department of Education, Dublin. I also wish to acknowledge the use of the Industrial Training Authority's draft report, *Vocational Training in Ireland*, (AnCO, Research and Planning Division, 1979), and the illuminating comments of Dr Gerry Kelly, Vice Principal, Red Deer College, Alberta, who accompanied me on my visit to Ireland.

Derek Marsh
November 1980

# I THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The current educational and training system in the Republic of Ireland is largely the product of the review undertaken between 1962 and 1964 within Ireland's membership of the OEDC. (Government Report 1965). The classic economic model of educational planning used began with premises about the needs of the economy (to shift from an agricultural to industrial base) and ended with assumptions about the functions of education to meet economic objectives. The model also took into account the demands of the Constitution of the Republic to allow the right by parents to provide for religious, intellectual, social, and physical education of their children as they wish.

## CENTRAL ORGANISATION

The Department of Education administers primary, secondary and vocational education, endowed schools, reformatory and industrial schools together with the National College of Art, the National Museum and the National Library. (The Department of Public Health and Local Government is responsible for school health.) It consists of a minister, a minister for state, and a permanent secretary. It is divided into two Departments each headed by an assistant secretary, and an Inspectorate headed by the Chief Inspector. Figure 1 (page 4 ) denotes broadly the responsibilities.

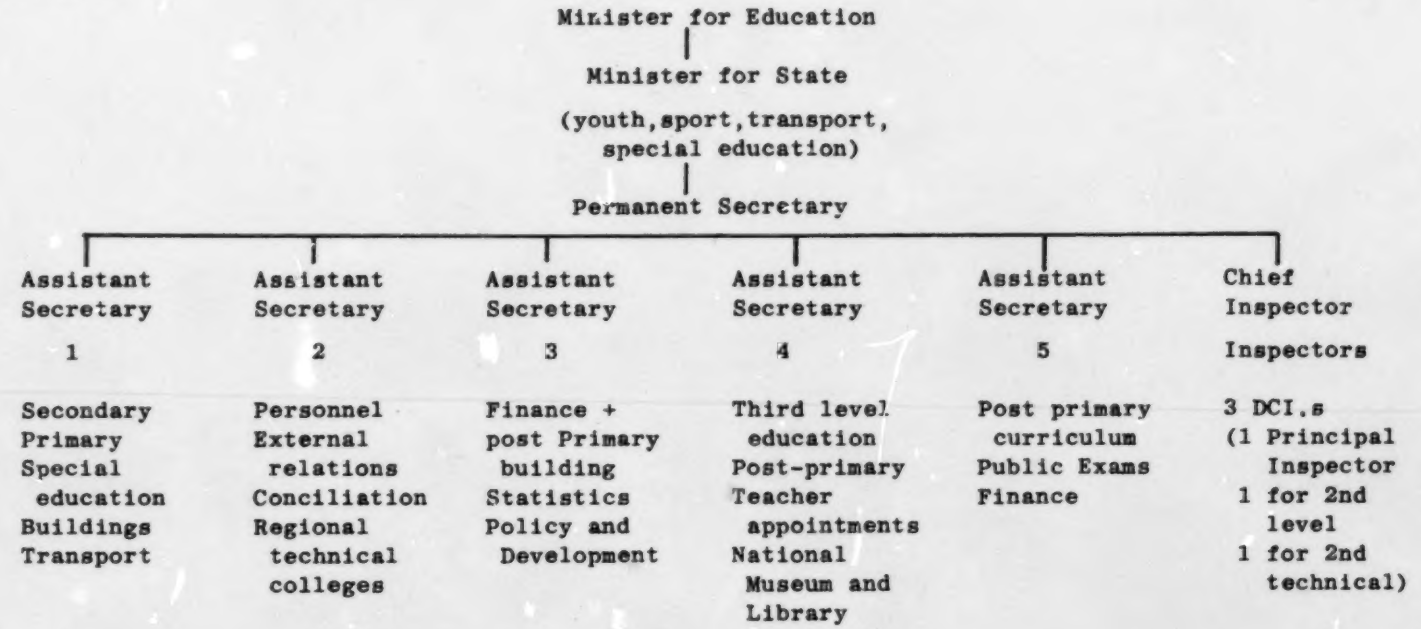
Universities are controlled by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the sole non-university degree awards body is the National Council for Education Awards (NCEA).

## THE HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY (HEA)

The Authority was established in 1968 by the Higher Education Authority Act to further the development of higher education; to assist in the co-ordination of state investment in higher education and prepare proposals for such investment; to promote the appreciation of the value of higher education and research; and to promote the attainment of equality of opportunity in higher education. Its specific functions include advising the Minister for Education on the need for new institutions, their nature and form, and on the legislative measures required for their establishment. The Authority receives and disburses funds voted by the Oireachtas (Parliament) for the universities and other higher education institutions designated by the Minister under the Act.

The Authority consists of a chairman and eighteen members,

FIGURE 1


Minister for Education
Minister for State
(youth, sport, transport, special education)
Permanent Secretary
Assistant Secretary 1
Secondary
Primary
Special education
Buildings
Transport
Assistant Secretary 2
Personnel
External relations
Conciliation
Regional technical colleges
Assistant Secretary 3
Finance + post Primary building
Statistics
Policy and Development
Assistant Secretary 4
Third level education
Post-primary
Teacher appointments
National Museum and Library
Assistant Secretary 5
Post primary curriculum
Public Exams
Finance
Chief Inspector
Inspectors
3 DCI.s
(1 Principal Inspector
1 for 2nd level
1 for 2nd technical)

(at least seven of whom are academic members). It works largely through standing committees; the Finance, Physical Development, and Education and Research Committees.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION AWARDS (NCEA)

The Council was established in 1972 to grant national recognition to courses in colleges of higher education outside the university system. Its two primary functions are to approve and recognise courses, and to grant and confer awards on students successfully completing these courses.

The Council consists of 31 members drawn from the educational, scientific, industrial and agricultural sections of the community, and has established five Boards of Studies:

1. Science and Paramedical Studies;
2. Engineering and Construction Studies;
3. Business and Social Studies;
4. Education and General Studies;
5. Art and Design Studies.

Course evaluation is carried out by each Board of Studies which appoints panels of assessors for each of the areas covered by the Board and each year appoints external examiners to monitor the performance of students taking NCEA award examinations. The Council is therefore concerned with the content of courses, the standards achieved by students, the academic organisation and the teaching at an institution, and the quality of the staff, resources and facilities available.

There are four kinds of NCEA awards:

1. One-Year Certificate;
2. National Certificate;
3. National Diploma;
4. Degree under four titles.
   (a) Bachelor of Engineering (B.Eng.);
   (b) Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.);
   (c) Bachelor of Business Studies (BBS);
   (d) Bachelor of Arts (BA)

The Council ensures that such degree courses correspond in standard to those leading to university degrees.

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION AND INDUSTRIAL INTERNSHIP

Students on all programmes at the National Institute for Higher Education (NIHE), Limerick spend a period in employment relevant to the course being pursued. This Co-operative Education

Programme is usually divided into two periods of six months for students on a Bachelor's Degree programme, while National Diploma students spend one period of six months in employment. The students carry out assignments during the period of co-operative education and credits are awarded for their work.

Schemes of industrial internship also operate in some other programmes leading to NCEA awards at colleges and institutions other than NIHE, Limerick.

FIRST LEVEL EDUCATION

Primary schooling starts officially at five and consists of an eight-year cycle completed at about 12. The system contains aided and non-aided schools. The aided schools are composed of some three thousand national schools with a population of 534,000 in 1980, and 103 special schools. Non-aided primary schools total about 110 and have a population of 20,000. The system is therefore dominated by the national schools, 93 per cent of which are Roman Catholic.

Organisationally, the State acts as agents for the management committee of each school by paying teachers' salaries set by the Department of Education in negotiation with the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO). Its main functions are to establish the curriculum, approve text books used, and maintain standards via the Inspectorate.

At local levels each school is run by a seven member committee of management headed by a manager. Four are appointed by and represent the 'patron' (the recognised denominational figure by the Minister), two are elected by and from the parents, the remaining one being the principal teacher (headmaster). The chairman is usually a cleric. The committee owns the school, its land and buildings, and the manager hires teachers.

SECOND LEVEL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Post-primary education is broadly in two parts, secondary schools, and vocational schools.

(a) Secondary Schools

There are two cycles, the junior cycle (ages 12 to 15) and senior cycle (15 to 17+). The Group Certificate can be taken after two years' study (i.e. at 14), the Intermediate Certificate after three years (i.e. at 15), and the Leaving Certificate two years after the Intermediate. As at first level, the board of management owns and runs the school and is again denominational.

Two major developments have occurred recently. First, up to 1974, a number of comprehensive schools were established which were also mostly denominational, and run by a three member committee of management consisting of one representative from the Department of Education

(who owned the school), one from the local Vocational Education Committee (VEC), (set up by the Vocational Education Act of 1931), and one representing the religious denomination of the school, who is also the chairman.

The second major development was the establishment of community schools and colleges, intended to be non-denominational and composed of amalgamated secondary schools or newly built institutions. These are usually joint Vocational Education Committee and religious ventures, also run by a committee of management consisting of two appointees by religion, two from the VEC, and two elected from and by the parents. Both comprehensive and community schools offer the same certificates as secondary schools.

In the lower cycle the population consists of some 132,000 in secondary, 5,500 in comprehensive, and 10,000 in community schools. The senior cycle figures are 65,000, 2,000 and 3,000. (Non-aided schools in the second level account only for some 2,000 pupils.)

All new schools are supposed to take the community form.

(b) Vocational Schools

Vocational schools are publically owned, maintained, and administered by Vocational Education Committees, sub-committees of the local government system, which are organised in 38 jurisdictions: four cities, seven urban districts, 25 counties, and in two divisions in one county. The VECs also offer third level vocational education and some second level vocational education through the Regional Technical Colleges, and in Dublin through the Dublin Institute of Technology. Originally set up to provide two types of education, 'continuation' and 'technical', these schools have since 1967 offered also the Intermediate and Leaving Certificates, thus causing some overlap with secondary school provision. The influence of the Department of Education over vocational schools is greater than over other secondary schools since the Department must sanction staff appointments made by the VECs.

THIRD LEVEL

Four groupings can be seen in the Third Level.

(a) The Regional Technical Colleges (RTC)

They combine second and third level technical and technological activities, concentrating mostly on technician training, and other third level activities. Each RTC of the nine is designed to meet specific national needs as well as catering for the region in which they are situated. The emphasis in these colleges is always to provide education and training across a broad range of disciplines which will enable students to find suitable employment within industry and commerce, i.e. to meet critical manpower shortages. They accommodate some 4,500 students out of 37,000 at present in the third level.

(b) The National Institutes of Higher Education

A National Institute of Higher Education (NIHE) was opened in Limerick in 1972, with a strong emphasis on science, technology and European studies: the NIHE was the first third level institution giving courses to degree level to be established in the Republic of Ireland and rounded out geographical provision of third level education by its location in Limerick. The College of Education at Limerick has recently had its range of activities extended, and is now named Thomond College of Education. The second National Institute of Higher Education was established in Dublin in 1975 and accepted its first students in 1980.

(c) The Universities

The universities dominate third level education (providing for 23,000 students). There are two, the National University and the University of Dublin. The latter has only one constituent college, Trinity. The former is divided into three University Colleges in Dublin, Galway, and Cork, and seven 'recognised' colleges (St. Patrick's, Maynooth; St. Patrick's, Drumcondra; Our Lady of Mercy College, Carysford; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; the NIHE, Limerick*; Thomond College of Education, Limerick; and the Royal College of Surgeons). It was announced in 1976 that each of these was to become a separate university. The two are empowered to award degrees, but as other third level institutions offer degrees, these are to be awarded by the NCEA.

(d) Miscellaneous

A miscellaneous group of third level training and religious colleges and institutions includes

the Dublin Institute of Technology comprising two Colleges of Technology, the College of Catering and Hotel Management, Commerce, Marketing, and Music which are administered by the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee.

REFERENCES

Government Report, *Investment in Education* (1965) Stationery Office, Dublin.

OECD Report, *Report of the Survey Team for Ireland: Investment in Education* (1969), OECD, Paris.

* The Government announced in December 1974 that NIHEL should be a recognised college of the National University of Ireland, with the capacity to evolve into a constituent college or to become an autnomous degree-awarding institution.

## II THE TRAINING SYSTEM

Training, with its specific and relatively short-term objectives as opposed to the more teleological functions of education, is treated separately because of the uniqueness of the Irish system.

### TRAINING

Training is largely the responsibility of two organisations, the Industrial Training Authority (An Chomhairle Oiliuna - AnCO) established by the Industrial Training Act of 1967 and the Council for Education, Recruitment and Training (CERT) in the hotel and catering industries.

### AnCO

The 1967 Industrial Training Act repealed the 1959 Apprenticeship Act and established an Industrial Training Authority (An Chomhairle Oiliuna - AnCO). In addition to supervising apprenticeship, AnCO had to provide and promote training for all of industry. (The only exclusions were agriculture and the professions, which remained the responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture and the various professional bodies.) The main responsibility for training was considered to lie with industry, with AnCO acting as co-ordinating and support body where necessary.

The Council of AnCO, which consists of 15 people, is appointed by the Minister for Labour, an independent chairman, five members nominated by the employers' organisations, five nominated by the workers' organisations and three other members. The Minister, after consultation with the Council, appoints the Director-General, and the Council appoints the independent chairmen of the voluntary industrial training committees to advise and assist AnCO in the seven designated sectors of textiles; clothing and footwear; food, drink and tobacco; engineering; chemicals; printing and paper; and construction.

The initial programme of AnCO consisted of:

(a) Expanding apprentice recruitment and training;

(b) Providing facilities for training or re-training adult workers, including redundant or other unemployed workers, and agricultural workers seeking other employment; and

(c) Designating industries for training purposes

and the introduction of a levy/grant system to stimulate training by industry itself and to ensure that the cost of training is shared equitably.

AnCO has 14 training centres with facilities for training unemployed and redundant workers, the initial training of apprentices, and to update skills of experienced workers. Training is also sponsored by AnCO in companies and in the RTCs.

AnCO is responsible for training some 15,000 apprentices in construction, engineering, electrical, metal, motor, furniture, painting, and crafts. Training in firms is under AnCO supervision and apprentices are released for day or block courses in local technical colleges and vocational schemes. Under the apprentice scheme first year apprentices attend full time, off-the-job courses either at an AnCO Training Centre, technical college, or in their own firms for appropriate periods. AnCO thus works closely with educational institutions, employers' and workers' organisations.

This co-operation is also seen in joint ventures with other agencies, such as the VECs, in tackling the problems of disadvantaged and unemployed youth and the preparation of young people for working life, with the Community Youth Training and Careers Training Programmes (for those over 16) and short induction to industry schemes.

AnCO also provides instructor training courses and its Training Advisory Service advises companies on training, operates the levy/grant and Technical Assistance Grants Schemes as well as validating training grants available for the Industrial Development Authority.

With its financial and legislative powers AnCO is a prominent feature in the vocational training system, impinging upon the RTCs and vocational schools. It sees itself as a key agent of change with its systems approach to training and in educational technology whose potential has not yet been fully explored in Ireland.

CERT is responsible for apprentice, craft and managerial training in the hotel and catering industries and validates courses held at two major centres, the RTC in Galway and the Dublin Institute of Technology.

## III BACKGROUND

Ireland has responded more positively than the United Kingdom to the opportunities offered by both the EEC and the OECD. In both instances, the Irish response can also be said to be unique.

### INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION

Uniqueness lies in the aggressive use of education for economic ends. Between 1962 and 1964 a major review of the educational system was undertaken, within Ireland's membership of the OECD, as the first country to look at its system in relation to 'the present and future requirements of scientific progress and economic growth'. The Government's 1965 report, *Investment in Education*, was scrutinised by a group of examiners invited by the OECD to assess Ireland's educational policy and planning. Their report, *Report of the Survey Team for Ireland: Investment in Education*, was published by the OECD in 1969. These reports present a comprehensive account of Irish education in the 60s and of the changes brought about at that time. They represent a significantly different impact from that in the United Kingdom as shown in a later survey (OECD (1975)).

Ireland remains largely concerned with an analysis of the priorities for education and the means proposed to attain major objectives. The approach centres on the relationship between, on the one hand, educational structures and provision, and on the other, economic development. The dominant problems are seen to be manpower needs and satisfying demands for education. A fundamental difficulty of educational planning is thus manifest, i.e. matching the economy and the 'output' of the educational system with the concept of the maximum amount of education, according to aptitude, for all young people - a concept which is now apparently the basis for most national educational policies, at least in OECD countries.

The problem of developing the planning mechanisms went to the Development Branch of the Department of Education, whose task it was to establish priorities for developing the educational system and the means to achieve priority targets. Ireland thus used the classic economic model of educational planning which began with premises about the needs of the economy (i.e. to switch from an agricultural to an industrial base), and finished with assumptions about what the schools could do to help meet these objectives. This approach could be considered to be too mechanistic (as reflected perhaps in official dissatisfaction with the humanities output of universities seen not to meet the real needs of the country). Education enhances manpower only in specific contexts; once away from the specifics,

the relationship becomes ambiguous. Nevertheless, Ireland identified the imbalances in its system; the manpower supply and demand, and the inequalities of investment by economic categories and by regions. This analysis was substantiated by the survey team. The Investment in Education team also pointed out: 'A considerable number of Irish pupils receive no post-primary education of any kind, and of pupils who begin post-primary courses a high proportion do not finish. Indeed, in the primary level we find indications that some 8,000 leave school every year without reaching primary certificate level. There are, in addition, inequalities in the participation in post-primary education of children at all levels, based on social group and geographical location. There is, clearly, a need for public policy to concern itself with these anomalies'.

Hence educational policy developments since 1965 have been broadly:

(a) First Level: to rationalise and improve facilities rapidly;

(b) Second Level: to develop institutions (notably comprehensive and community schools) to meet increased demand for places;

(c) Third Level: to increase the emphasis on technological education.

These changes followed from the current economic and demographic trends in Ireland.

## ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

In so far as the EEC is concerned, for example, Ireland's economy had, until 1980, grown progressively. The strategy adopted aims to increase industrial production for export, largely through attracting foreign investment. At the time of joining the Common Market in 1974 the Irish economy was underdeveloped by European standards, although the previous years had shown an average GNP growth of 4.3 per cent (but still below the 5.5 per cent of the OECD countries). From 1974 to 1978 the Irish economy also fared better than the EEC average of 3.4 per cent. Nevertheless, Ireland has received considerable sums from the EEC's Regional Development Fund and generally the Irish are more positively conscious of their EEC membership than are the British.

The major factor in industrial change during the 70s has been the success of Government sponsored drives for attracting foreign industry, via the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), in high technology and capital intensive industries.

As a result, Government involvement in the GNP has risen to 51 per cent. This is reflected in the number of agencies involved in economic development and in the accompanying vocational education and training.

Nevertheless, Ireland still lags behind Europe according to indicators of living standards. Irish per capita income reached only 47 per cent of the EEC average, for example, in 1977. National development policies for 1979-1981 are aimed at increasing employment by 25,000 a year, which will require increases in output of 6 per cent to 7 per cent. This is unlikely to be achieved, as the paper *Economic Background to the Budget, 1980* (Stationery Office, Dublin) reveals, due to the international economic climate and the relationship with the UK as the major trading partner rather than to internal conditions. The inability to meet completely the need for technologists and other highly qualified people, and the growing gap between the well qualified and the less able and less well qualified in the population, are notable factors. The downturn in the economy in 1980 (e.g. rising inflation, the effective 11 per cent devaluation of the Irish pound against the pound sterling, and the VAT increase to 25 per cent) introduced the first checks in what had been a continuously growing investment in education and training.

The Irish education and training system is hence a function of the following major factors:

(a) An economy in the process of change from a long tradition of agriculture to a sophisticated, technologically-based industry and a forecast of a shortage of qualified people;

(b) A growing economy experiencing its first faltering steps;

(c) The growth in population, with 50 per cent under 25, and 894,000 in full time education;

(d) An uneven spread of population, concentrated in the east;

(e) Peoples' attitudes and expectation at odds with the policy of the Government;

(f) A serious youth unemployment situation on the one hand, with demands for skilled labour on the other;

(g) A growing centralisation in the Government of economic and educational functions.

POPULATION

From 1840 the population of Ireland declined from six million to 2.8 million in 1961. Since then there has been a consistent increase, due to economic and industrial growth, to more (and earlier) marriages, and to the reversal of emigration which counteracted the high rate of natural increase (twice that of any other Common Market country). The 1977 population was estimated to be 3,189,000 and is projected to increase by 710,000, to just under 4,000,000 by 1986.

The impact of this demographic pattern, especially in the 15-19 age group (50 per cent of the population was estimated to be aged 25 and under, a proportion not likely to be changed significantly before 1986), is precisely the reverse of that in the United Kingdom and most EEC countries. Of 298,000 young people in the 15-19 age group, some 20,000 seek their first job. In 1980, there is an education population of 894,000, almost one-third of the total population. These figures explain the pressures on the educational system, which, together with changing expectations of young people for careers in Ireland and a deliberate policy of economic change from agricultural to industrial base, account for the growth, nature, and responses of the three levels of education in Ireland.

The population is, however, unevenly spread across the various regions: 37 per cent is located in the eastern region (which includes Dublin and its peripheral townships). This results in the greater urbanisation and industrialisation of the east. The traditional drift from rural areas and small farms to the cities also reflects the deliberate policy changes in economic planning (started in the 1950s).

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The labour force is spread across three main occupational groups. Figure 1 shows the change in emphasis in the economy:

Figure 1

| Economic Sector: | 1966 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973 | 1974 | 1975 | 1977 | 1978 | +/- |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agriculture | 333.5 | 273.1 | 267 | 260 | 254 | 250 | 235 | 229 | - 19.4% |
| Industry | 293.7 | 173.1 | 317 | 324 | 331 | 315 | 110 | 319 | + 12.0% |
| Services | 438 | 459 | 466 | 473 | 482 | 484 | 492 | 500 | + 6.5% |
| Total: 1,048,000 | | | | | | | | | |

Unemployment remains high. Extrapolated figures show a peak in 1978 with 12.8 per cent unemployed. At present, falling redundancies and increasing vacancies point to a buoyant labour market, yet in some areas there is a shortage of labour. Forecasts in technical manpower needs made in the *Report by the Manpower Consultative Committee (1979)* of the National Manpower Services, show during the '80s a consistent short-fall between requirements and availability.

This Report emphasises a contextual problem. Set up to advise on the manpower policy in Ireland's economic and social development, the committee identified three priorities. First, to overcome shortages of highly qualified, skilled and semi-skilled labour related to the development of the economy in two broad areas, those jobs requiring third level qualifications

(e.g. mechanical and production engineering, electronic and electrical engineering), and those requiring apprenticeship (e.g. fitters, toolmakers), both of which will have increasing requirements ranging from 4 per cent to 15 per cent per annum. Secondly, to overcome the problem of 'youth' (aged 15 to 24) unemployment. The sub-committee on this has not yet formally reported but suggests that unemployment in the 15-19 age range (about 15,000 to 20,000) is running between 12 per cent and 16 per cent, and in the 20-24 age range (some 15,000 to 18,000 people) at 8 per cent - 9 per cent. At the moment an EEC commission is examining this issue generally in Europe and their report is awaited. The third priority lies in changing people's attitudes towards industrial work. There is a strong, anti-industrial trend, for young people's aspirations and expectations still lie in 'white-collar' work.

A 1978 EEC Report (V/55/78-E: *Vocational Preparation in Ireland*) detected clearly some of the problems of attitudes and expectations of young Irish people. Despite Government policy, school leavers still seek high status, non-industrial jobs. Social attitudes have been slow to adjust; aspirations remain traditional.

School Leaving Patterns

Youth unemployment is localised; high in the urban and working class areas and some poorer rural areas, low in the middle class areas. In Ballyfermot, Dublin, for example in 1976, only 25 per cent left school with any qualification, 80 per cent left at 16, and 23 per cent remained unemployed.

First level leavers, i.e. at 15, are in a difficult position. At 15 a young person cannot join a union, does not get national insurance, cannot qualify for vocational schools' training, or enter other training schemes, nor obtain unemployment benefit. They therefore drift into unskilled jobs which they may lose at 16 when they qualify. Girls tend to go into routine operative, industrial jobs or enter service jobs. The 1978 EEC Report (U/55/78-E) illustrates that all the usual disadvantages operate for this group.

Thus, whilst Ireland's economy has been growing, the situation as far as many in the 15-19 age group are concerned, is not quite as buoyant. By 1986 this group will have increased by 250,000, giving a potential increase in the labour force of almost 25 per cent in 10 years. 66 per cent of this increase will be located in Dublin and other urban areas (e.g. Limerick, Cork, Galway, Waterford). These figures reflect the general demographic trends of the population as a whole.

GOVERNMENT

The changing role of central Government in Irish life is interesting and there are some striking contrasts with the United Kingdom as to how the country is run at national and local levels.

The Irish Free State came into being in 1922 and the Republic in 1949. Its Constitution provides for an elected president (Quachtaran na Eireann), a two-chamber parliament (the Seanad Eirann and Dail Eirann), and a system of government by cabinet headed by a prime minister (Taoiseach).

Parliament (Oireachtas) has a lower chamber of 147 members (or Teachtai Dala - TDs), representing 42 constituencies, each returning three to five deputies by proportional representation using the single transferable vote system. The upper chamber, or Senate, contains 60 members, 11 of whom are nominated by the prime minister, and 49 are elected, (three by the universities, the remaining representing five 'vocational interest' panels - education and culture, labour, agriculture, industry and commerce, and administration).

Executive power lies with the government which consists of between seven and 16 members. Each member, nominated by the prime minister and approved by the Dail, heads one of the present 16 departments into which administration is divided. In addition to the 16 departments, there are numerous state sponsored bodies, a feature of Irish government.

Local government is also distinctly different. Ireland is divided into 22 county councils and four county boroughs. Within the counties there are seven boroughs and 49 urban districts served by commissioners (a third tier system only operates in large urban areas). Administration is through a city or county 'manager' (rather than by committee), who is responsible for all activities except raising loans and passing by-laws. Managers are appointed by a Local Appointments Commission. Education is largely the responsibility of locally elected Vocational Education Committees with their own chief executive officers, or of the individual institution's Board of Managers.

The Constitution declares that the family is the 'natural educator'. Unlike the UK, therefore, local government impinges only partially and indirectly on educational provision. Direct involvement lies in providing statutorily vocational education through Vocational Education Committees which control the vocational schools and some third level institutes; the rest remains within the control of the boards of management in each school. Education is thus fairly community and denominationally based.

At national level, with a mixed aided and non-aided system, the state provides funds, with complete financial control in certain sectors (e.g. comprehensive schools). The Ministry of Education maintains control on the curriculum, appointments, salaries, and conditions of service with an Inspectorate playing a traditional, and conservative role. It remains, largely, an agent of the primary and secondary school owners. At third level much power has statutorily been devolved to bodies such as AnCO, HEA, NCEA, and CERT. However, in a system with avowed centralised planning functions in the output, it is inevitable that bureaucracy will grow, with the Department seeking every opportunity to direct, rather than control, local provision.

# IV ISSUES CONFRONTING IRISH EDUCATION

A number of clear-cut, general issues emerge from examining the system.

## EXTERNAL FUNDING SOURCES

Colleges have been substantially funded through the EEC and the World Bank for much needed capital facilities and equipment. Although there are apparent immediate financial benefits from this association one wonders whether the colleges may find difficulty in the future meeting ongoing operating expenses for the capital investments gained from these sources.

## POPULATION GROWTH OF IRELAND

The impact of the population growth and the abundance of college age students is significant. While most colleges in the Western world are predicting a decrease in enrolments in the 1980s, Ireland is expecting to have a large increase. This will place additional demands on existing colleges, raising questions of turning down qualified candidates, expanding colleges, or building new ones. An example of the latter case is the proposal to build four new colleges in suburban Dublin in the next few years.

It is also worth repeating that unemployment in Ireland approximates 10 per cent of the labour force. A large proportion of the unemployed is under the age of 25 and this is placing more pressure on the college system to train manpower in some cases, or, in others simply to provide worthwhile educational activities keeping the unemployed off the streets.

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS TECHNICAL EDUCATION

As is the case in many countries, Ireland has over the years placed emphasis on a liberal arts tradition in post secondary education - university graduates being trained primarily for roles in the priesthood, medicine and law. Vocationally oriented courses in engineering and business have now gained academic respectability but technical education and training is often looked upon as a weak academic alternative. This situation may be changing though, as indicated by high student demand for technical college places as well as employee demands for qualified technicians and technologists to work in newly developing high technology industry.

ACADEMIC ESCALATION

Perhaps indirectly associated with the above image of technical education one gains the ironic impression that both colleges and higher education institutes tend to regard attainment of higher entrance requirements and higher degree offerings as a mark of academic excellence.

The problem, particularly as it pertains to the colleges, may be one of these institutions drifting into roles not originally envisaged displacing originally intended but not clearly enunciated goals.

Perhaps other institutions will eventually step in to fill the gaps.

Some examples of this drift and displacement include:

(a) Excalating entrance requirements for courses at Regional Technical Colleges - this poses a problem because students with acceptable qualifications in the past can no longer gain entry even though they meet minimum requirements. Colleges find themselves in a dilemma; they do not feel they can responsibly turn down students with higher grades.

(b) College degree courses. Although officials of Dublin colleges do not feel that degree courses drain resources from lower level courses they find themselves in a situation where they cannot accommodate extremely high student demand for non-degree work due to limited space and resources.

According to the Ministry of Education this problem may be resolved as additional technical colleges are built in suburban Dublin and as the new Dublin Institute of Higher Education takes so much of the degree work now found in Dublin colleges. The Ministry itself however does not appear to have a clear policy statement enunciating the non-degree roles of colleges thus leaving the door somewhat open for drift to occur.

(c) College - AnCO relationships. Colleges only provide 'higher level academic work' for apprenticeship courses. Apprenticeship training takes place at colleges as well as AnCO training centres in the belief that the technical colleges offer academic educational aspects, leaving AnCO to offer 'lower level' technical and experiental aspects of the courses. One suspects that the distinction is somewhat artificial. The problem is further highlighted as college teachers' unions dispute that AnCO teachers may in fact be performing college level duties.

THE OLD BOY NETWORK

One of the features of a smaller educational system may be that at a managerial level 'everyone knows

everyone else'. Consequently, in exploring 'how things get done' in Ireland one quickly discovers that the informal channels are perhaps more influential than formal ones. College principals, chief education and executive officers and ministerial officials tend to know one another personally, may have attended the same schools and in the course of their work tend to sit on several committees with one another. No doubt this cross fertilization allows a great deal of latitude and flexibility in accomplishing certain tasks, but does it also offer the potential for limiting vision, perpetuation of the *status quo* as well as frustration for those not on the 'inside'?

## RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE ON EDUCATION

Education in Ireland, particularly at the lower levels, is oriented towards guaranteeing the religious (whatever denomination) and moral upbringing of children. Local boards of management reflect this influence by including five representatives, one of whom is chairman, appointed by the bishop.

At the college level this religious influence is not so apparent as colleges operate under separate vocational education committees with greater industrial and municipal representation.

## CONTROL: CENTRALISATION-DECENTRALISION

The question of at which level should decisions be made in the college system and who should make them is an ongoing one in Ireland as it is elsewhere.

There is much centralised control in the system as evidenced by the requirement for Dublin approval of all teacher engagements, or course approvals which must pass through both the national awards body (NCEA) and the Ministry of Education (for funding). In the latter case a centralised approach may be most appropriate- in the other,greater decentralisation of decision-making to the college level may reap the benefits of increased effectiveness and accountability as college management accepts greater responsibilities. While recognising the limitations of a brief study such as this, one feels that in general the colleges believe they should have greater responsibility and control for their own regional affairs.

At the same time, however, it may be that the Irish college system is experiencing a process of normal maturation. Except for Dublin, the colleges are fairly new and the tendency towards

centralised control may reflect this youthfulness and will possibly change as the system matures.

It may also be kept in mind that colleges' legislation co[illegible]er the Vocational Education Act of 1931 which was oriented towards the secondary school sector. The new colleges are tarred with the same brush. Assuming that secondary schools generally experience tighter controls than post-secondary institutions, it could be that colleges see themselves as being treated in a manner similar to lower level schools thus frustrating perceived needs for greater self-direction, and responsiveness to college problems.

## SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF LABOUR - COLLEGE SYSTEM RESPONSE

Is it possible to match educational output with job demand? Is it even desirable? Does the graduate of an educational institution have the right to expect that there will be a job available? Are the now imported technologies ephermeral? These are but a few of the questions facing Ireland and other countries when tackling the universal problem of manpower planning.

In Ireland, manpower forecasting is the responsibility of the Department of Labour, a department which is well aware of the difficulties in determining supply and demand. Further compounding the problem are the increases in population growth and the changing economic make-up of Ireland brought about by the attraction of new industry to the country. Much of the new industry requires higher level technological skills and is not highly job intensive, particularly for the lesser skilled.

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps because the college system is relatively new, the concept of staff development for college lecturers and managers is not commonly established in Ireland. College in-service courses for teachers, teacher exchange and financial aid for professional development tend to occur haphazardly. Similarly there are few opportunities for those in college management positions to participate in developmental activities specifically geared to their needs. There seems to be general support from those interviewed that this is an area of need which the colleges, the teacher unions, and the Department of Education should address!

## V THE WORK OF THE CITY OF DUBLIN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The City of Dublin VEC is conscious of its role as 'diagnosing and developing educational inputs to meet the diverging needs of people in contemporary Ireland as an advancing industrial nation'. It offers, through its 24 vocational schools and colleges and the Dublin Institute of Technology, a diverse range of programmes (see Figures 1 & 2 pages 24 and 25 ) to cater for individual and community life from 'moral in function to elective pastimes' to professional and degree courses. The variety of courses reflects the comprehensiveness of provision at second and third level to meet vocational (and non-vocational) needs.

Broadly, the second level vocational schools and colleges provide courses leading to the Group, Intermediate and Leaving Certificates, pre-university, secretarial, and pre-employment courses, as well as classes and summer schools in the traditional idea of continuation, adult education (vocational, non-vocational and 'second-chance'). One second level school is based within the third level institution of the College of Commerce at Rathmines which is one of six constituent third level institutions[1] forming the Dublin Institute of Technology.

In common with other VECs, the City of Dublin has responded to the special problems of disadvantaged and unemployed youth. Pre-employment schemes, involving a transition year alternating between school and work, middle level technician courses supported by European Social Fund grants, and junior ventures with CERT and AnCO (especially the Career Training Programmes) at present comprise the major approaches to the problems, despite the disadvantages of school based programmes.

The Dublin Institute of Technology is mainly concerned with professional and degree award course (mostly awarded at present by Trinity College, Dublin) and advanced technician and technological courses in business and administrative studies; architecture, surveying and building; engineering; printing, hotel, catering, food, home sciences; science and related studies; mathematics and computer programming. They also offer adult education courses.

### ISSUES

The overcrowded conditions of the old buildings housing the Institute of Technology are in stark contrast to the RTCs and NIHE. Future policy (Clancy and Bengar 1979) is directed towards relieving the pressures with a ring of RTCs on the

outskirts and to concentrate second and third level craft and apprentice training in the city centre, taking the higher level work to the Dublin NIHE, a move not welcomed by the Institute which also shows an academic escalation similar to that noted in Galway. Such direct policy will lead to colleges encompassing apprentice, technical, adult continuation and 'refresher' education, and, at the same time, attempt to bring the percentage participation rates at third level up to those in the rest of the EEC.

FIGURE 1

THE FOLLOWING DAY COURSES ARE AVAILABLE IN VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS:

| COURSE | ENTRY STANDARD | DESCRIPTION | DURATION | ELIGIBILITY FOR EMPLOYMENT OR FUTURE EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Group Certificate | Completed Primary Education | Junior secondary course comprising study of a 'group' of selected subjects (technical, commercial, secretarial or home economics) together with general subjects. | 2 or 3 years | Trade apprenticeship or other occupations as junior trainees in manufacturing or service industries, business, offices, hotel, and catering establishments. Entry to courses (2), (4) or (5) below. |
| 2. Intermediate Certificate | Completed Primary Education | More general junior secondary course, having a range of subjects similar to (1) above but without 'grouping' and reaching a somewhat higher standard to facilitate those continuing to senior secondary courses. | 3 years | Similar to (1) above, but most students obtaining Intermediate Certificate (minimum five subjects) would be likely to stay on for further secondary courses (see (3), (4) and (5).) |
| 3. Leaving Certificate | Intermediate Certificate | Senior secondary course. (Vocational schools provide a large range of general technical, scientific and commercial subjects at this level.) | 2 years | Gives eligibility for a wider range of employment and entry to courses of higher education in universities, vocational colleges, or other third-level institutions, depending on grades obtained in examination. |
| 4. Pre-Employment Courses | Intermediate or Group Certificate | A programme combining social, general and technical education and training with work experience in industry or commerce. Students are equipped with marketable skills and make personal contact with employers, trade unionists, Manpower personnel, etc. | 1 year | Similar to (1) or (2) above, but the additional education and work experience in this course should improve choices and prospects. |
| 5. Secretarial Courses | Group or Intermediate Certificate | (a) Intensive tuition in secretarial skills (shorthand, typewriting, office procedures) with supplementary general subjects.<br>(b) As (a) but arriving at higher performance standards. | 1 year | Prepares students for employment as secretaries, and administrative assistants in industry, and in public service at local, national or international level. |
| 6. Pre-University Courses | Pass Leaving Certificate | These courses are for students who have already passed the Leaving Certificate examination but wish to obtain higher grades, with a view to entering particular third-level courses. | 1 year | As Leaving Certificate (see (4) above). |

FIGURE 2

THE CITY OF DUBLIN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE OFFERS THE FOLLOWING PROFESSIONAL AND DEGREE COURSES:

(Minimum entry requirement - normally Leaving Certificate at Higher Level).

| COURSE | TYPE | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|
| **ARCHITECTURE** | | |
| Architecture | Full-time | Bolton St. |
| **ART & DESIGN** | | |
| Environmental Design | Full-time | 18 Parnell |
| Communications Design | Full-time | Square |
| **BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION** | | |
| Accountancy, Certified, Chartered and Cost-Management | Part-time Day & Evening | Rathmines |
| Business Studies | Full-time | Rathmines |
| Company Secretaryship | Part-Time Day & Evening | Rathmines |
| Marketing | Full-time & Part-time | 18 Parnell Square |
| Marketing | Part-time Day & Evening | Rathmines |
| **ENGINEERING** | | |
| Electrical/Electronic | Full-time or Evening | Kevin St. |
| Mechanical | Full-time or Evening | Bolton St. |
| Motor Industry Management | Full-time or Part-time | Bolton St. |
| Production | Full-time | Bolton St. |
| Structural | Full-time or Evening | Bolton St. |
| **HOTEL & CATERING MANAGEMENT** | | |
| Hotel & Catering Management | Full-time | C.Brugha St |
| **JOURNALISAM** | | |
| Communications/Journalism | Full-time | Rathmines |
| **SCIENCE & MATHEMATICS** | | |
| Applied Science | Full-time or Part-time | Kevin St. |
| Graduateship Royal Institute of Chemistry* | Part-time | Kevin St. |
| Graduateship Institute of Physics* | Part-time | Kevin St. |
| Dietetics & Nutrition | Full-time | Kevin St. |
| Opthalmic Optics | Full-time | Kevin St. |
| Food Science* | Part-time | Kevin St. |
| Associateship of Institute of Statisticians | Evening | Kevin St. |

* Entry requirement - Degree Standard

SURVEYING

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Construction Economics | Full-time | Bolton St. |
| Environmental Economics | Full-time | Bolton St. |

SHORT STUDIES IN MANAGEMENT STUDIES

School of Management Studies,
Rathmines

| | |
|---|---|
| Work Study Training & Allied Techniques | Data Processing |
| Supervisory Management | Financial Management & Costing |
| Quantitiative Techniques | Marketing & Sales Management |
| | Hospital Management |
| | Management Principles |

College of Marketing,
18 Parnell Square

Management Supervision in Retailing
Marketing & Sales Management
Merchandising Techniques

Short Coures:
- Furniture Restoration
- Interior Design
- Photography and Advertising Graphics

## VI A DESCRIPTION OF MIDDLE, THIRD LEVEL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT GALWAY REGIONAL TECHNICAL COLLEGE

The Galway College was the seventh Regional Technical College established in Ireland since 1969.The first courses were held in September 1972. During its initial year of operation it had approximately 1,000 students. By 1978 the student population was 2,200, of whom 900 pursued full-time third level courses, 500 attended second level Craft and Apprenticeship courses and a further 800 attended part-time evening day-release or block-release type courses. There are 150 full-time and part-time and visiting lecturing staff attached to the college as well as some 70 technical and administrative support staff.

The stated aims of the college are typical of all RTCs: to provide education and training across a broad range of disciplines, thereby enabling students to find immediate and worthwhile employment within industry and commerce. The college is regional and aims in particular to service the training needs of industry in the West of Ireland and thus attract new industry by providing a pool of trained manpower in the region. In addition to the national specialist training of management personnel for the hotel and tourism industries, the college is the only one outside Dublin which has a full-time Degree programme in hotel and catering management.

Other main areas of specialisation include medical laboratory sciences, marine and aquatic biology, chemical analysis, electronics, building management, computer programming, accountancy and marketing.

The college staff provide within the Western Region of Ireland a nucleus of expertise which is available to local industrialists and commercial agencies for consultancy or research and development. Many college staff are engaged in research projects with colleagues in University College, Galway in chemistry, biochemistry and microbiology.

### Sponsored Courses (ESF)

Since 1975, the college has offered a number of courses as part of the Special Training Programme sponsored by the European Social Fund. Students pursuing these courses are paid a weekly grant, (currently £16.66) in addition to payment of fees. During the session 1979/80, the following Special Training Courses were offered:

| | |
|---|---|
| Reception/Information | One Year Course |
| Computer Programming | Two Year Course |
| Construction Technician Skills | Two Year Course |
| Electronic Technician Skills | Two Year Course |
| Industrial Engineering | Two Year Course |

College Organisations

Figure 1 (on page 29 ) shows the recently proposed organisational chart of the college, based on a subject division of responsibilities grouped under sections, departments, and schools.

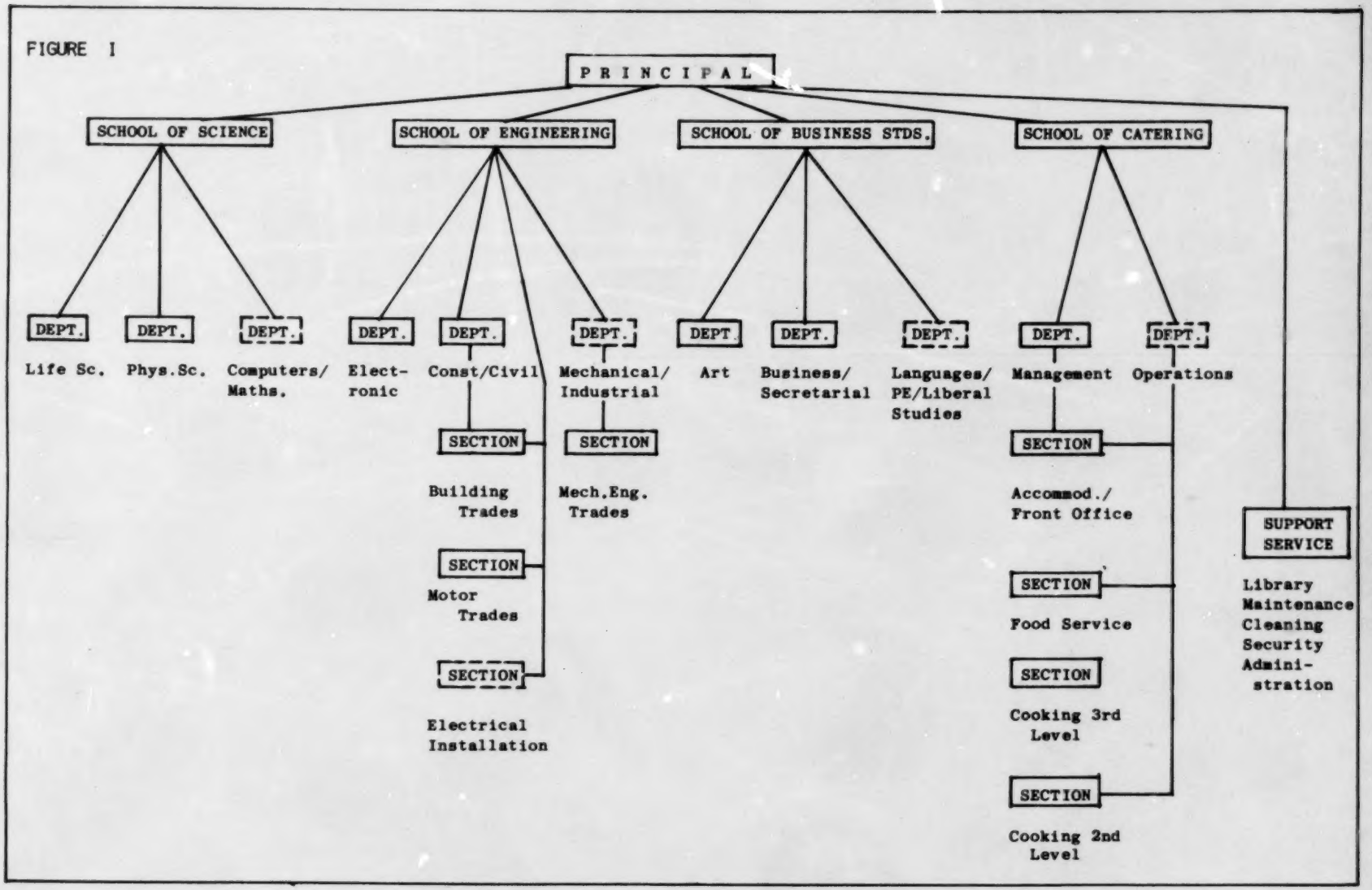
ISSUES

The college is a pleasant modern building on the outskirts of the town. It has already had one extension built and further development is planned, financed largely by World Bank loans at special rates. Hence, equipment is modern - even lavish - including a well stocked library with provision for student-centred learning (in need of enlarging), modern kitchens and demonstration rooms, language laboratories, and up-to-date electronic and engineering work-shops (including, for example, a £60,000 computer-operated tool maker) all serviced by technical staff. Room utilisation is running at 93 per cent, reflecting the pressure for courses and places by students.

Such pressures have had a somewhat deleterious effect on the college. With the high demand for places the college can, and does, take students with the best grades in Certificates for all courses. This selection has two results. First, an academic escalation occurs in that staff wish to develop their courses to higher levels, aiming to increase the number of degree awards in conjunction with the University College, Galway. (NCEA awards are still seen as less 'acceptable' than university ones.) Hence, curriculum development is not broadly based and no need is seen to cater for the less able student who does not find his way into third level education.

Staff are aware of this issue and would see one of the major issues during the 80s as the need to re-establish vocational education in its proper role. Vocational schools, by offering Intermediate and Leaving Certificates appear to have lost their purpose. This is an important issue for all RTCs since they encompass second level craft and apprentice training as well as third level higher education. Ironically, while an RTC pursues its academic escalation it increases its drift away from vocational work in the traditional Irish sense. As an institution an RTC feels, in any case, that it is at times an awkward appendage to the whole system.As AnCO (1980) has pointed out in *Barriers to Higher Education*, the RTC has not improved student entry significantly other than from the traditional, formal channels.

FIGURE I


PRINCIPAL
SCHOOL OF SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS STDS.
SCHOOL OF CATERING
DEPT.
Life Sc.
Phys.Sc.
Computers/ Maths.
Elect- ronic
Const/Civil
Mechanical/ Industrial
Art
Business/ Secretarial
Languages/ PE/Liberal Studies
Management
Operations
SECTION
Building Trades
Motor Trades
Electrical Installation
Mech.Eng. Trades
Accommod./ Front Office
Food Service
Cooking 3rd Level
Cooking 2nd Level
SUPPORT SERVICE
Library
Maintenance
Cleaning
Security
Admini- stration

The second effect of pressure is on academic staff who, caught in the teaching trap, and combined with the rapid increase in the technologies with which they are involved, feel unable to keep pace with changes. Hence, with no firm staff development policy and, after nine years the first missionary zeal is lessening, morale shows signs of falling. This lack of motivation, or uncertainty, tends to express itself through increased pressure by the union to begin to draw boundaries concerning terms of service and conditions previously left as loose arrangements. The most recent agreement on pay and conditions include job descriptions for all levels. A need for managerial training was expressed, particularly, since the college is redesigning its structure into schools, departments and sections.

The second major issue discerned has to do with college management. The growing increase of the influence of the Department of Education (particularly in financial matters at a time when the first brakes are being applied) creates a relationship between central government and the college over which some concern was expressed. Added to an already strong feeling that an RTC had not yet found its proper place in the system, Government interventions did not significantly lessen college autonomy but increased bureaucratic delay in decision making, particularly concerning staff appointments and expenditure (both of which have to be approved). There also appeared to be a sense that those handling RTC matters in the Department were not familiar with the special circumstances of an RTC.

This raises the issue of internal college management generally. The most noticeable feature is the large number of interactions a principal, for example, has to make. Within the college there are the usual interactions with departments, staff unions, Students' Union, etc. Externally, as well as with central Government, the college has to work with the Vocational Education Committee (locally as well as regionally), the NCEA, the University College, CERT, AnCO, and a variety of local industrial and commercial concerns and bodies. While such interactions help to fulfil the regional, vocational aims of the college, a large negative 'field force' is exerted on the principal. As a compensation, however, Ireland is a relatively small country and many people wear different hats. Contacts are informal as well as formal. The networks established help horizontal transactions as well as the vertical transactions of the hierarchy.

This situation leads to a number of options concerning management style, ranging from a *quid pro quo* style, through playing the various interests against each other in a balancing act, to the basic process of simply 'keeping things going'. Participative management appeared to exist at a professional colleague level rather than through formally structured processes of an Academic Board with specific powers. The relationship between the Board of Management and the College Council is complex. While the relative smallness of the institution allows for informal processes, if the RTC is to develop after its first cycle of growth, formal policies and

processes will probably have to be considered.

The third issue of interest is the relationship between the RTC and AnCO. The existing arrangement, that AnCO deals with the practical elements of apprentice courses and the RTC with theoretical inputs, obviously leads to some conflicts between the two systems. Students are awkwardly in the middle. Many trainers would see the divorce between the two, emphasised by training in two separate institutions, as being ill-judged and clumsy. Both the RTC and AnCO appear to be victims of central, political decisions. However, the close co-operation between industry and education, which is a fundamental practice in second and third level education and supported by legislation, ameliorates the conflicts. The relationship with CERT, however, seemed to be easier.

## CONCLUSION

These were the main issues which emerged from discussion about the work of the RTC in terms of the full-time courses offered. These are relatively limited in range and entirely geared towards meeting manpower needs in specific economic areas to achieve specific policies, national and regional. The tradition of adult continuing education is frail; the vocational schools have always catered for these needs, but the RTC does offer a range of evening activities. Hence, the main thrust of the college is seen to be firmly in the area of advanced further education, with specific emphases on hotel and catering and, at a lower level, with apprenticeship training.

The achievement since 1972 is remarkable and, unless there is some extraordinary change in circumstances, the RTC can only continue to develop in a way reminiscent of the early 60s in the United Kingdom.

Further information on Galway Regional Technical College is available in Coombe Lodge Information Paper No.1584
*A model of middle third level vocational training in the Republic of Ireland.*

# VII ACADEMIC THIRD LEVEL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, LIMERICK (NIHEL)

The NIHEL, a unique institution, is impressive in terms of its site and accommodation, resources available, the interesting approach to course administration, and the curriculum. The two concepts of European Studies and of co-operative education (together with the assessment procedure which, based on the American process, fits neatly into the aims and objectives of the Institution) are offered as interesting models. (See Section I page 8, and Appendices I and II, pp 37 and 38.)

## HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The Irish Government decided to establish a National Institute for Higher Education at Limerick in 1968. In 1969 The Higher Education Authority (HEA) recommended that it should be: (a) a national institution meeting needs of the whole country and that work at NIHEL should be technological, but also cover a significant element of the humanities; (b) that National Certificate, National Diploma and Degree programmes should be offered; (c) that the entry standards to the Degree programmes should be comparable to those at existing universities; (d) that the Institute should be under the general jurisdiction of an independent governing body, and that legislative proposals for the establishment of NIHEL and its financing should come within the ambit of the HEA.

The Director was appointed in January 1970 and a detailed plan for the growth of NIHEL for the next 20 years was completed in November 1971. The development plan provides for an eventual enrolment of 8,000 students, and two additional building phases.

NIHEL opened in 1972 with 100 students enrolled in programmes leading to National Diploma and Degree Awards in Administrative Systems, Business Studies, Electronic Engineering, European Studies, and Materials and Industrial Engineering, although additional courses now operate. (See Appendix III on page 39.)

The Government announced in December 1974 that NIHEL 'shall be a Recognised College of The National University of Ireland, with the capacity to evolve into a Constituent College or to become an autonomous degree-awarding institution'. The first Governing Body was appointed by the Government in 1975. The Institute was declared a Recognised College of The National University of Ireland on 12th March 1976. The Chancellor of the University conferred Honours and Pass Degrees, and the Chairman of The National Council for Educational Awards conferred National Diplomas on the first graduates in 1977.

On 18th November 1977, the Minister for Education announced that The National Council for Education Awards was being designated as the sole degree-awarding body for the Instutute.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

National in scope and European in outlook, NIHEL states that it is striving to bridge the gap between the arts and the sciences. It aims to provide an educated technologist who can apply classroom theory, laboratory practice, and off-campus work experience (Co-operative Education) in industry, business, agriculture, the public service and the professions.

'The Ireland of today is a nation in transition - from agriculture to industry, from introspection to a sense of community, from protectionism to free trade. Taxpayers are demanding that higher education be relevant to the economic and social development of Ireland. Students are insisting that they be provided with a modern education that will permit them to pursue rewarding and satisfying career opportunities. Irish employers are seeking appropriately educated graduates who are ready to enter the world of work with the necessary knowledge, skills and practical experience'. (Dr E M Walsh, Director, NIHEL)

The Institute's commitment to meeting these challenges is reflected in three ways:

1. Through the recruitment of staff who have a balanced combination of academic achievement and practical knowledge;
2. Through NIHEL teaching methods which stress the practical applications of theorectical knowledge;
3. Through comprehensive and sophisticated laboratories and equipment.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Institute is organised as a matrix of interdisciplines and departments. Each interdiscipline is composed of members drawn from the various disciplines within the Institute, from those currently practising in relevant jobs, from other academic bodies and from the student body. Interdisciplines are responsible to the Academic Board for programme design, academic standards, accredidation and programme monitoring. The day-to-day operation within disciplines is the responsibility of the academic department which controls and manages resources.

'Interdisciplinary' is an important NIHEL concept. The student's programme of study is constructed from a number of carefully selected modules (see Appendix III page 39) from various appropriate disciplines, and students in one programme are not separated from students in another during the learning process. As a result, conventional barriers between disciplines tend to be reduced. 500 modules are available to provide the necessary core of knowledge and to meet individual students' needs.

## NIHEL TIES TO INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY

### Continuing Education

Through its Continuing Education Programme, NIHEL:

1. Provides facilities for the recurrent educational needs of the community;
2. Operates programmes relevant to the people living in the surrounding area;
3. Contributes support to other groups involved in continuing education.

A special feature of the Institute's Continuing Education Programme is an innovation for mature students called Link-In for Education (LIFE). This takes education one step closer to the community. Based on the philosophy of the Open University, the LIFE scheme admits people who are not full-time or part-time Degree, Diploma or Certificate students to take particular courses for a variety of reasons:

(a) Executives and technologists register for NIHEL courses to stay up-to-date on the latest techniques in their field;

(b) Employers take courses to enable them to re-orient their careers to reflect new interests or opportunities;

(c) Housewives find the LIFE scheme useful for preparing to re-enter the working world.

LIFE students attend lectures and tutorials or laboratory sessions with undergraduates and enjoy full access to all relevant facilities at NIHEL. The only pre-entrance requirement is that a potential student has some minimum work experience and a capacity to benefit from selected courses.

### Community Access to NIHEL

A committee established by the Regional Development Organisation is developing various methods for making the resources of NIHEL's Library available to residents of the Mid-West Region.

Laboratory and computer facilities are also available to the community. While primarily intended for teaching and research NIHEL's extensive facilities are made available to individuals and to organisations.

Three Institutes also operate within NIHEL:

(a) Institute for Industrial Research and Standards (IIRS)

The Mid-West Regional Office of the Institute for Industrial Research and Standards is located on campus. It aims to make technology and information available from IIRS easily accessible to firms in the region and, when possible, helps to form links between those firms and NIHEL. Assistance is offered to businesses requiring technical services, consultancy, advice concerning sub-contracting and general technical information.

(b) Joint Institute for International Business Studies (JIIBS)

A Joint Institute for International Business Studies (JIIBS) has been established at Fordham University, New York City. External funding provides for the exchange of faculty and under-graduates, Fellowships in the USA for NIHEL Business Administration graduates, and joint research. Multilateral arrangements include links with the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw.

(c) Regional Management Centre

A Regional Management Centre has recently been established in the Mid-West Region to meet the training and performance improvement needs of local industry, commerce and the public sectors. The Centre provides an integration of the skills of AnCO, the NIHEL, Shannon Development Authority, and other training and consultancy bodies with well established programmes.

The primary aim of the Regional Management Centre is to work in co-operation with local organisations to identify significant performance problems and to use the expertise available within the region or from outside to provide appropriate training or development as necessary.

ISSUES

Like the RTC, the NIHE is under pressure from students for places. Entry is controlled partly by selecting those with better grades in their Certificates, and partly by the underlying philosophy of the Institution, i.e. to meet the needs of technology, so that now engineering and business studies take precedence in admissions. A third stage of building is about to begin. With no shortage of capital funds, the NIHE is set to expand considerably, although student selection will apparently still have to operate.

However, the NIHE has apparently reached a crisis point in its development. At the moment an Act has been drafted and is under attack from the NIHE in that the proposed legislation removes most of the previously enjoyed autonomy. In this context the way the Institution is funded in the 80s is paramount. The proposed Act will, for example, remove the NIHE's ability to

invest as its pleases the two per cent of its budget available and place that power, *inter alia*, in the Department of Education. (A struggle is engaged between the NIHE and the Department, the former trying to have the Act abandoned or at least amended.) Some see this proposed Act as the outcome of differing political views about the Institution. Another major issue of contention between the Institute and central authority is over the question of who has the final say in staff appointments.

Organisationally, the Institute has a matrix organisation at one level, but at another level operates on a strictly hierarchical basis. Three 'Colleges' are headed by 'Deans' who, together with the Director of senior administrative staff comprise the Management Team, effectively running the NIHE on the day-to-day basis. Three bodies also exist in the structure, the Governing Body, the Academic Council, and the Faculty Board. Staff and student representation would appear to be small and at lower and less influential levels only.

Union pressures are growing. One example is reflected in promotion and staff development. A committee considered the problem of staff promotion and produced a report which stayed in the Department of Education for five years. Promotion is now by allocation. (Maximum salaries are reached after the relatively short period of 13 years' service on the lecturers' scale.) A proposal for staff appraisal has been 'on the table' for two years as a means of producing criteria for promotion, but has not been accepted by the unions. Personnel policy generally is seen to be possible only through the industrial relations mechanism which, after the Industrial Relations Act was passed, is frequently seen to be a totally separate system which effectively takes over managerial functions within an institution like the NIHE. Nevertheless, one expressed aim of the NIHE is to provide a balance of 40 per cent Principal and Senior Lecturers to 60 per cent Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers. (The agreed terms with RTCs reached in 1979 does not apply to the NIHE.) It would seem to be fair to say that until the constitutional crisis is solved, staff (and other) issues are unlikely to be settled and comprehensive growth take place.

APPENDIX I

**EUROPEAN STUDIES**

**The NIHEL Bachelors Degree in European Studies is of special interest.**

**The objective of NIHEL's European studies programmes is to develop a 'European' - 'a young internationalist who can cross national boundaries and transcend national differences to accomplish the necessary co-ordination for a developing Ireland and a Europe moving towards unity'. By producing graduates who speak Continental languages and have been educated to understand the contemporary European world, the European studies programme at NIHEL hopes to train executives and technologists who will work successfully within the practical framework of the European Community.**

**A significant proportion of the programme is devoted to the EEC as the principal supra-national association in Western Europe. However, the academic concern with the EEC is by no means exclusive; any state or group of states within the politico-cultural borders of Europe is a legitimate objective of study.**

**Unlike many other European studies programmes elsewhere, the NIHEL programme is utilitarian - reflecting the highly motivated technological slant of the Institute. While sufficiently broad to provide students with knowledge and skills necessary for careers in a wide range of employment, the programme is specifically geared towards meeting national and local needs in the public services, semi-state bodies, the tourist industry, mass media, export-oriented industry and commerce.**

**The Bachelors Degree programme in European studies is structured on a group of core modules, the basis of the student's knowledge of contemporary Europe. During the first four terms, for example, the student is introduced to courses in economics, history, law, politics, sociology, and one modern European language (French, German or Russian). During the third year (following Co-operative Education) a student, while continuing to take core modules in each area, also takes specialist modules from a chosen option area. During the fourth year, a student concentrates on specialist options and related modules.**

APPENDIX II

COURSES OFFERED at NIHEL

Business Administration

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bachelors Degree: (4 years) | Administrative Systems : Options | 'Office Administration' (Management Services) |
| | Business Studies : | (Personnel Management) (Accounting) (Marketing) |
| National Diploma: (3 years) | Business Studies : | (Administrative Systems) (Banking) (Personnel Management) (Marketing) (Accounting) |
| National Certificate: (2 years) | Data Processing | |

Applied Mathematical Science, Electronics and Engineering

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bachelors Degree: (4 years) | Materials Engineering<br>Production Engineering<br>Electronics Engineering<br>Industrial & Management<br>Mathematical Science | |
| National Diploma: (3 years) | Engineering | (Industrial Electronics)<br>(Computer Engineering)<br>(Instrumentation and Control) |

Materials and Production Engineering

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bachelors Degree: (4 Years) | Materials Engineering<br>Production Engineering<br>Energy Technology<br>Chemical Technology | |
| National Diploma: (3 years) | Engineering (Material and Production) | |
| Industrial Design Diploma (4 years) | | |

European Studies

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bachelors Degree : | European Studies | (Social Research)<br>(Public Organisations) |
| | Public Administration | |
| | Regional Studies | |

Post Graduate Studies

(a) Masters Degree
Category A - course work and minor thesis

(b) Doctorates

APPENDIX III

THE MODULE CREDIT SYSTEM

A module is a self-contained package in a single term. A full-time student normally takes four, five, or six modules during each 12-week term and 60 during a four-year programme of study. Certain modules are called 'core modules' and must be taken by all students enrolled in a particular courses; other modules are called 'elective modules', the student having discretion in choosing these.

A module includes both instruction and assessment. Each module is identified by a code, (title and credit structure) - for example, EC221 MACROECONOMICS 2-1-6. The first two letters of the Code (EC) indicate the subject area to which the module belongs, in this case ECONOMICS. The first digit of the code (2) corresponds to the year of study in which the module is normally taken. The three credit structure digits after the title identify the composition of the module in terms of hours per week of lecture, laboratory/tutorial, and private study respectively. The latter is a guide for the typical student. In the case above, for example, 2-1-6 means that a student in MACROECONOMICS should expect to attend two formal one-hour lectures each week, participate in one tutorial period, and devote about six hours to private study. Programmes of study at NIHEL require a student to take a credit load of approximately 50 hours per week.

The credit gained by a student who completes a module is equal numerically to the total load in hours per week attached to the module. For example, a student who completed module EC221 receives 9 credits. The total number of credits accumulated represents the total quantity of work performed.

Grading System

The *quality* of a student's work in a module is indicated by a grade awarded following the completion of the module. In addition to a letter grade, each student's result is awarded a point value which permits calculation of accumulated performance. The following is a list of grades that may be awarded and their significance within the NIHEL system.

| Grade | Significance | Quality Point | Credit Awarded |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | Excellent | 4 | Yes |
| B | Good | 3 | Yes |
| C+ | Most Satisfactory | 2.5 | Yes |
| C | Satisfactory | 2 | Yes |
| D | Minimum passing in module | 1 | Yes |
| E | Unsatisfactory | 0 | No |
| F | Failure | 0 | No |
| G | Audit | - | No |
| I | Incomplete | - | No |
| M | Awarded in case of project or module spanning multiple terms | - | No |
| N | Unsatisfactory completion of module taker on a pass/fail basis | - | No |
| P | Pass on a module taken on a pass/fail basis | - | Yes |
| W | Withdrawn | - | No |

## Assessment

Each module is assessed in isolation (except sequences of definitely linked modules, mentioned above) and a student's final success in a programme of study is determined primarily on the basis of accumulated performance. Students can monitor their progress through computer reports provided at the end of each term.

## Term and Cumulative Quality Credit Average

The Term Quality Credit Average (Term QCA) represents the average quality of a student's performance in all modules taken in one term. The Cumulative QCA represents the average quality of a student's performance in all modules taken while registered at NIHEL for a particular programme of study.

At the end of each term a student is issued with a Student Transcript Report showing grades, credits and QCA. The following Table (on page 41 ) illustrates how Term QCA is calculated, using a typical Student Report.

Consequently, the average quality of the student's performance for the term, in the above example, has a value of 2.49 and lies between a C and C+, or between satisfactory and most satisfactory.

The grades which do not affect QCA are G, I, M, N, P, and W.

| Module Code | Attempted Hours | Credited Hours | Grade | Quality Point Value | Quality Credit Score * |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FR301 | 12 | 12 | P | 0 | 0 |
| EC101 | 9 | 9 | A | 4 | 36 |
| RU101 | 9 | 9 | C+ | 2.5 | 22.5 |
| MP101 | 9 | 9 | B | 3 | 27 |
| MA131 | 9 | 0 | E | 0 | 0 |
| CM301 | 12 | 12 | C | 2 | 24 |
| DP101 | 9 | 9 | B | 3 | 27 |
| | 69 | 60 | | | 136.5 |

(* Quality Credit Score = Credited Hours x Quality Point Value)

$$\text{Term QCA} = \frac{\text{Quality Credit Score}}{\text{Attempted Hours minus Pass Hours}} = \frac{136.5}{69.12} = 2.39 \text{ QCA}$$

Cumlative QCA is calculated in a similar way, using Cumulative Credited Hours and cumulative Quality Credit Score.

In order to avoid placing undue emphasis on the first year of study, the student's QCA for the first 150 credits (the first year) is averaged and weighted to reflect one term's work (50 credits). This QCA then carries forward to the subsequent period of study.

## APPENDIX IV

### MAJOR PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

1. The Agricultural Institute (An Foras Taluntais),
   19 Sandymount Avenue, Dublin 4.
2. Council for Education, Recruitment and Training
   for the Hotel, Catering and Tourism Industries (CERT),
   1 Ailesbury Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.
3. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture House,
   Kildare Street, Dublin 2.
4. Department of Labour, Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4.
5. Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies,
   10 Burlington Road, Dublin 4.
6. Economic and Social Research Institute,
   4 Burlington Road, Dublin 4.
7. The Higher Education Authority,
   21 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2.
8. Industrial Training Authority (An Chomhairle Oiliuna),(AnCO)
   Upper Baggot Street, Dublin 4.
9. Institute for Industrial Research and Standards,
   Ballymun Road, Dublin 9.
10. Institute of Public Administration,
    57-61 Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4.
11. Irish Foundation for Human Development,
    11, Hatch Street, Dublin 2.
12. Irish Management Institute, Sandyford Road, Dublin 4.
13. Medical Research Council of Ireland, 9 Clyde Road, Dublin 4.
14. National Board for Science and Technology,
    Shelbourne House, Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4.
15. National Council for Educational Awards, (NCEA)
    26 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1.
16. National Economic and Social Council Oisin House,
    Pearse Street, Dublin 2.
17. Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland,
    St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.
18. Science Policy Research Centre, Department of
    Political Economy, University College, Dublin 4.

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*Oideas.* An Roinn Oideacjeus, Srâid Maoilbhride, Baile A tha Cliath 1.

# USEFUL ADDRESSES

AnCO
The Industrial Training Authority,
P.O.Box 456
Baggot Court,
27-33 Upper Baggot Street
Dublin 4.

CEDEFOP
European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training,
1000 Berlin 31
Bundesallee 22.

CERT
Council for Education, Recruitment and Training
for the Hotel, Catering and Tourism Industries
1 Ailesbury Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4.

Commission of the European Communities,
Rue de la loi 200
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

Employment Action Team,
Department of Labour,
Davitt House
Mespil Road
Dublin 4.

Government Publication Sales Office,
Dublin.

Institute of Education,
University of London,
Senate House,
London WC1E 7HU

Manpower Consultative Committee
Department of Labour
Davitt House
Mespil Road,
Dublin 4.

National Board for Science and Technology,
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